

AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in this application.

1.-38. (Canceled)

39. (Currently Amended) A connection system for use in a bone fixation device, comprising:

a first bone coupling assembly adapted to be secured to a first vertebrae;

a rod comprising:

a rigid first end portion including a surface received at least partially by and coupled to the first bone coupling assembly;

a rigid second end portion;

a longitudinal flexible, ~~substantially axially inelastic~~ member located between the first end portion and the second end portion, non-slidably coupled to the first end portion, and non-slidably coupled to the second end portion; and

a plurality of rigid spacers located between the first and second end portions and circumferentially disposed about the longitudinal flexible, ~~substantially axially inelastic~~ member;

a second bone coupling assembly coupled to the rod at a location other than the first end portion and adapted to be secured to a second vertebrae, the second vertebrae adjacent to the first vertebrae,

wherein the first and second end portions directly limit motion of the plurality of rigid spacers along the longitudinal flexible, ~~substantially inelastic~~ member and the plurality of rigid spacers limit[s] the minimum distance between the first vertebrae and the second vertebrae when the rod is coupled to the first vertebrae and the second, adjacent vertebrae via the first bone coupling assembly and the second bone coupling assembly;

wherein each of the plurality of rigid spacers include a male interlocking member and a female interlocking cavity configured to structurally interlock with a corresponding female interlocking cavity and male interlocking member of one of the plurality of rigid spacers, the first end portion and the second end portion, respectively.

40. (Canceled)

41. (Currently Amended) The connection system of claim 39, wherein said longitudinal flexible, ~~substantially axially inelastic~~ member comprises at least one of a metal wire comprising a plurality of metal yarns and a braided metal wire structure comprising a plurality of interwoven metal wires.

42. (Previously Presented) The connection system of claim 39, wherein the second bone coupling assembly is connected to the second end portion.

43.-57. (Canceled)

58. (Currently Amended) The connection system of claim 39, wherein the plurality of rigid spacers and at least one of the first and second end portions have a substantially similar outer diameter.

59. (Currently Amended) The connection system of claim 39, wherein the first and second end portions each have an outer diameter that is greater than an inner diameter of the plurality of rigid spacers.

60. (Currently Amended) The connection system of claim 39, wherein the first and second end portions each have an outer circumference that is substantially similar to a circumference of the plurality of rigid spacers.

61. (Canceled)

62. (Canceled)

63. (New) A connection system for use in a bone fixation device, comprising:

a first bone coupling assembly adapted to be secured to a first vertebrae;

a rod comprising:

a rigid first end portion coupled to the first bone coupling assembly;

a rigid second end portion;

a longitudinal flexible member located between the first end portion and the second end portion, the longitudinal flexible member being coupled to the first and second end portions; and

a plurality of rigid spacers located between the first and second end portions and circumferentially disposed about the longitudinal flexible member;

a second bone coupling assembly coupled to the rod at a location other than the first end portion and adapted to be secured to a second vertebrae, the second vertebrae adjacent to the first vertebrae,

wherein the first and second end portions directly limit motion of the rigid spacers along the longitudinal flexible member and the rigid spacers limit the minimum distance between the first and second vertebrae when the rod is coupled to the first and second vertebrae via the first and second bone coupling assemblies, respectively;

wherein each rigid spacer includes a male interlocking member and a female interlocking cavity, the male interlocking member being configured to engage a corresponding female interlocking cavity formed in one of an adjacent rigid spacer, the first rigid portion and the second rigid portion, the female interlocking cavity being configured to engage a corresponding male interlocking member formed on one of an adjacent rigid spacer, the first rigid portion and the second rigid portion.